

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-15

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O 172002Z JUL 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 177805

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 3751 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
DAMASCUS DTD 17 JUL

QTE

S E C R E T AMMAN 3751

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR MOPS LE SY XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING--MESSAGE FROM ASAD

1. KING CALLED ME URGENTLY TO PALACE EARLY EVENING JULY 17 TO
PROVIDE ME WITH MESSAGE FROM ASAD TO "HIGHEST LEVELS" US GOVERNMENT.
THIS TELEGRAM SUMMARIZES MAIN POINTS OF MESSAGE. SEPTTEL WILL
COVER MORE IN DETAIL FROM NEAR VERBATIM NOTES.

2. ASAD ASKED KING TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO SHAH, KING KHALID
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AND US SPECIFICALLY. KING ALSO TRYING TO GET WORD TO SADAT

3. ASAD CLAIMS SITUATION IN EXTREMELY CRITICAL. PALESTINIANS HAVE BECOME EMBOLDENED AND ENCOURAGED SOVIETS TO PUT HEAVY PRESSURE ON SYRIANS.

4. ASAD RECEIVED WHAT KHADDAM CALLED AN ULTIMATIM FROM SOVIETS WHICH THREATENED SYRIA IF IT DID NOT WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON. SOVIETS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY EXPECTED SYRIA AS PRICE OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH USSR TO ACCEPT SOVIET POLICIES IN LEBANON. I ASKED KING IF SOVIETS HAD DIRECTLY THREATENED TO STOP ARMS AND ECONOMIC AID TO SYRIA. HE SAID HE HAD NOT SEEN TEXT OF SOVIET NOTE, BUT FROM SYRIAN DEBRIEF BY KHADDAM TODAY HE SAID THAT SUCH A STEP WAS IMPLIED NOT SPECIFICALLY THREATENED.

5. KHADDAM SAID HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW MOST UNPRODUCTIVE. MET GROMYKO SEVERAL TIMES BUT COULD NOT CHANGE SOVIET PERCEPTIONS.

6. ASAD CONCLUDES FROM SOVIET PRESSURE THAT HE IS IN "GRAVE DANGER OF ANOTHER ANGOLA" IN LEBANON. HE IS ALSO DEEPLY CONCERNED BY APPARENT CREATION OF A LIBYAN, PLO, IRAQ SOVIET ALIGNMENT ACTIVELY AGAINST SYRIA OVER LEBANON.

7. KING SAID ASAD GAVE HIM SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CONCERN ABOUT SOVIETS INCLUDING ALLEGED SOVIET FIRING ON LEBANONES (CHRISTIAN NAVAL UNIT, AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION BY FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON AND PLO REFUSAL TO COME TO DAMASCUS FOR MEETING YESTEREDAY BUT KING SAID HE HAD SEEN NOTHING SPECIFICALLY PINPOINTING CUBANS.

8. ASAD NOW GREATLY FEARS CUT OFF OF MILITARY SPARES AND ECONOMIC AID AND IS ASKING SAUDIS, SHAH, AND KING SAID US WHAT THEY COULD DO TO ALLEVIATE PRESSURE OR HELP IF CUTOFF ACTUALLY COMES. KING SAID THAT HE IS OF COURSE PREPARED TO PROVIDE ASAD WITH WHATEVER HELP HE CAN AND ALSO TO CONVASS HIS FRIENDS SUPPORT OF ASAD. HE WILL SEE SHAH TOMORROW AND SEND COURT MINISTER KHAMMASH TO KHALID SAME DAY.

9. KING SAID THAT SYRIANS MAKE POINT THAT IF LEBANON GOES, KUWAIT WILL BE NEXT WITH SAUDI NOT FAR BEHIND.

10. ASAD BELIEVES THAT COMMUNIST PARTY IN IRAQ IS STRONG AND
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WHILE IT NOW COOPERATES WITH IRAQI BAATH, IT COULD TURN THE TABLES IF GIVEN A CHANCE.

11. ASAD SAID HE HAS REFUSED SOVIET NAVAL FACILITIES REQUESTED AFTER SADAT ASKED SOVIET TO LEAVE EGYPT AND UNHAPPINESS WITH SYRIA AND NEW FACILITIES MAY ALSO BE A SOVIET MOTIVATION IN LEBANON.

12. FINALLY KING JUST CALLED ME ON PHONE TO SAY THAT ASAD CONCLUDED
THAT RIGHTIST POSITION IN LEBANON AT PRESENT IS GOOD, BUT THAT
IF ALL OF THE SOVIET PRESSURE CONTINUES IT COULD SHIFT AGAINST
THEM.
PICKERING UNQTE ROBINSON

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